

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6326
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PASS AGRICULTURE ELECTRONICALLY
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, EEC
SUBJECT: COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL MINISTERS APRIL 24-27

REF: (A) EC A-10; (B) EC A-13; (C) EC A-96;
(D) BRUSSELS 6875

1. SUMMARY: AFTER FOUR STRAIGHT DAYS OF MEETINGS, MOSTLY
SPENT IN BILATERALS, THE COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL MINISTERS
ADJOURNED WITHOUT AGREEMENT ON THE 1978/79 PRICE PACKAGE.
WINE AND MONETARY COMPENSATORY AMOUNTS (MCA'S) WERE THE
MAJOR OBSTACLES TO AGREEMENT. SHORTLY BEFORE ADJOURNMENT,
THE COMMISSION PRESENTED A WORKING PAPER WHICH WILL
SERVE AS THE BASIS FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS.
SOME OF THE MAJOR FEATURES OF THIS PAPER ARE: SPECIAL
GREEN RATE FOR PIGMEAT MCA'S FOR FRANCE, A REDUCTION IN
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THE MILK CORESPONSIBILITY LEVEL TO 0.5 PERCENT, A
STRENGTHENING OF THE PRICE SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR WINE, AND
AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE STRUCTURAL MEASURES PROPOSED BY
THE COMMISSION. THE DOCUMENT ALSO CALLS FOR A THREE UNIT
OF ACCOUNT PER METRIC TON REDUCTION IN THE ITALIAN IMPORT
LEVIES ON FEEDGRAINS FOR 1978/79 AND FOR THE ADDITION OF
TOMATO JUICE AND PEARS TO THE LIST OF PRODUCTS ELIGIBLE

FOR PROCESSING SUBSIDIES (APRICOTS WOULD BE REMOVED FROM THE LIST). THE COUNCIL FORMALLY APPROVED THE 1977 PRODUCER SUBSIDIES FOR HOPS AND EXTENDED THE BEEF AND MILK MARKETING YEARS TO MAY 21. FINALLY, THE PAPER PROPOSED INCREASES FOR A NUMBER OF MAJOR FARM PRODUCTS HIGHER THAN THOSE CONTAINED IN THE COMMISSION'S ORIGINAL PROPOSALS. THESE ARE SHOWN IN THE TEXT. THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL MINISTERS WILL TAKE PLACE MAY 8-9, 1978. END SUMMARY.

2. AT THE START OF THE COUNCIL MEETING ON APRIL 24, COUNCIL PRESIDENT DALSAGER CIRCULATED A BRIEF AND RATHER SKETCHY PAPER AIMED AT SERVING AS THE BASIS FOR COMPROMISE ON THE PRICE PACKAGE FOR 1978/79 MARKETING YEAR. SOME OF THE KEY FEATURES OF THE PROPOSAL WERE: REDUCTION IN THE B SUGAR QUOTAS TO 125 INSTEAD OF 120 PERCENT, AN UNSPECIFIED REDUCTION IN THE CORESPONSIBILITY LEVY; SUSPENSION OF INTERVENTION BUYING FOR NFDN IN THE WINTER MONTHS, AUTHORIZATION FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THE UK MILK MARKETING BOARD UNTIL 1982, PHASING OUT OF MCA'S WITHIN FIVE YEARS, CERTAIN ADJUSTMENTS IN THE METHOD OF CALCULATING MCA'S FOR PIGMEAT AND STRUCTURAL AIDS FOR WESTERN IRELAND. THE COUNCIL PAPER ALSO PROVIDED FOR THE CONTINUATION OF UK BUTTER SUBSIDY UNTIL 3/31/79 (CURRENTLY DUE TO EXPIRE AT THE END OF 1978) AND FOR A REDUCTION OF 5 UNITS OF ACCOUNT IN ITALIAN IMPORT LEVIES ON FEEDGRAINS IN 1978/79. HOWEVER, THERE WERE LARGE GAPS IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DOCUMENT. THE AVERAGE INCREASE IN PRICES WAS NOT SPECIFIED NOR WERE THE ACTUAL ADJUSTMENTS IN GREEN RATES. FURTHERMORE, THE PAPER PROPOSED THAT THE RESOLUTION OF THE QUESTION OF NEW EC RULES IN THE WINE SECTOR BE POSTPONED UNTIL OCTOBER 1978. IN ADDITION, NO SPECIAL MEASURES WERE PROPOSED TO IMPROVE THE INCOME SITUATION OF BELGIAN FARMERS (WE ARE TOLD THAT THE COMMISSION ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO PROPOSE CERTAIN TAX REBATES AND OTHER BENEFITS FOR BELGIAN FARMERS BUT THAT SUCH MEASURES WERE VIGOROUSLY OPPOSED BY THE OTHER MEMBER STATES).

3. AFTER A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF THE PAPER PRESENTED BY THE COUNCIL PRESIDENCY, THE COUNCIL DISSOLVED INTO A SERIES OF QUOTE BILATERALS UNQUOTE (I.E., MEETINGS BETWEEN COMMISSIONER GUNDELACH, COUNCIL PRESIDENT DALSAGER, AND ONE OR MORE NATIONAL MINISTERS). THESE BILATERALS CONTINUED UNTIL VIRTUALLY THE END OF THE SESSION ON APRIL 27. THIS UNUSUAL PROCEDURE PROVOKED CONSIDERABLE CRITICISM ON THE PART OF MANY OF THE DELEGATIONS, WHO FELT THAT IT PREVENTED THE COUNCIL AS A WHOLE FROM COMING TO GRIPS WITH THE PRICE PACKAGE. SOME DELEGATIONS FELT THAT RATHER THAN COMING CLOSER TO AGREEMENT, THE MEMBER STATES' POSITIONS HAD BECOME MORE RIGID AS A RESULT OF

THE MEETING. THE MAJOR AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT THAT SEEMED TO EMERGE FROM THIS SERIES OF BILATERALS CONCERNED WINE AND MCA'S. WITH RESPECT TO WINE, THERE IS A TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FRANCE, ITALY AND THE REST OF THE MEMBER STATES, IN PARTICULARLY GERMANY. FRANCE SEEKS THE IMPOSITION OF A FLOOR PRICE IN INTRA-EC TRADE WHICH WOULD PREVENT THEIR PRODUCERS FROM BEING UNDERCUT BY ITALIAN WINE GROWERS. ITALY, ON THE OTHER HAND, APPEARS WILLING TO ACCEPT THE CONCEPT OF A FLOOR PRICE ONLY IF VERY STRONG MEASURES ARE PROVIDED FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF WINE FROM THE MARKET (I.E., DISTILLATION). THE ITALIANS PREFER

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT ADDING LINE 2 PARA 5B)

USEEC, PASS AGRICULTURE ELECTONICALLY, PARIS ALSO FOR USOECD,
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TO EMPHASIZE A STRUCTURAL SOLUTION TO THE WINE PROBLEM. THE OTHER MEMBER STATES ARE PRIMARILY CONCERNED THAT THE COMPROMISE WORKED OUT BETWEEN FRANCE AND ITALY DOES NOT COST TOO MUCH. THE MCA QUESTION REVOLVED PARTICULARLY AROUND THE QUESTION OF THE MCA'S TO BE APPLIED ON PIGMEAT, AND THE UK PUSHING FOR A RECALCULATION AND REDUCTION OF MCA'S FOR THIS AND OTHER PROCESSED PRODUCTS AND THE DANES, DUTCH, AND GERMANS OPPOSING SUCH REVISION. WHILE THESE ISSUES APPEARED TO GET THE MOST ATTENTION THERE NONETHELESS APPEARED TO BE LARGE AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT IN OTHER SECTORS.

4. AS THE BILATERAL MEETINGS DRAGGED ON INTO THURSDAY, IT BECAME INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT NO AGREEMENT WOULD BE REACHED. FINALLY, ON THURSDAY EVENING THE MINISTERS DECIDED TO ADJOURN UNTIL MAY 8-9. IN VIEW OF THE INABILITY TO REACH DECISIONS ON PRICES, THE COUNCIL AGREED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO EXTEND THE BEEF AND MILK MARKETING YEARS TO MAY 21. THEY ALSO FIXED THE BASE AND PURCHASE PRICES FOR CAULI- FLOWER FOR THE MONTH OF MAY AT 12.01 AND 5.25 UNITS OF ACCOUNT PER 100 KG, RESPECTIVELY. ALSO, THE COUNCIL FORMALLY APPROVED THE PRODUCER SUBSIDY FOR HOPS FOR THE 1977 HARVEST: AROMATIC - 375 UNITS OF ACCOUNT PER HECTARE; BITTER - 285 UNITS OF ACCOUNT PER HECTARE; AND OTHER - 500 UNITS OF ACCOUNT PER HECTARE. THESE SUBSIDIES WERE APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE AT THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEET- ING (REF D).

5. ABOUT AN HOUR BEFORE THIS ADJOURNMENT, THE COMMISSION PRESENTED A 50-PAGE PAPER AIMED AT SERVING AS THE BASIS FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS. THE MAJOR FEATURES OF THIS DOCUMENT ARE OUTLINED IN SUBSEQUENT PARAGRAPHS:

A. MCA'S - IN THE FUTURE, ALL ADJUSTMENTS IN MCA'S WOULD BE DECIDED AND EFFECTED IN THE COURSE OF THE ANNUAL PRICE FIXING. HOWEVER, WHEN THE VALUE OF A CURRENCY CHANGED BY MORE THAN 5 PERCENT, A DEROGATION FROM THIS PRINCIPLE MIGHT BE PERMITTED AFTER EXAMINATION BY THE COUNCIL BEFORE OCTOBER 1 OF EACH YEAR. THE COUNCIL WOULD SET AN OBJECTIVE OF MOVING STEADILY TOWARD THE ELIMINATION OF MCA'S. A 6 POINT DECREASE IN IRISH MCA'S AND A 5 POINT DECREASE IN ITALIAN MCA'S IS PROPOSED ALONG WITH A 0.3 PERCENT REVALUATION OF THE GERMAN GREEN RATE. CHANGES IN FRENCH MCA'S ARE NOT SPECIFIED; HOWEVER, IT IS PROPOSED THAT THERE BE A SPECIAL GREEN RATE FIXED FOR THE PIGMEAT SECTOR FOR FRANCE. CERTAIN CHANGES IN THE METHOD OF CALCULATION OF MCA'S FOR STARCH PRODUCTS AND CERTAIN OTHER PROCESSED PRODUCTS ARE ALSO PROPOSED.

B. GRAINS - AUA/MT REDUCTION IN ITALIAN IMPORT LEVIES ON FEEDGRAINS IS PROPOSED. IT IS ALSO PROPOSED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS REDUCTION BE APPLIED TO FEEDGRAINS IMPORTED BY LAND. ALSO, AN EQUIVALENT SUBSIDY WOULD BE GRANTED ON IMPORTS FROM MEMBER STATES BY LAND. THE COUNCIL QUOTE TAKES NOTE UNQUOTE OF THE COMMISSION'S

INTENTION TO EXAMINE THE PROBLEM OF GRAIN SUBSTITUTES, NOTABLY MANIOC, WITH A VIEW TOWARDS A QUICK DECISION IF NECESSARY. PRODUCTION SUBSIDIES WOULD BE GRANTED FOR CORN GROATS AND BROKEN RICE FOR BREWING. THE COUNCIL WOULD UNDERTAKE TO REEXAMINE THE WHOLE OF THE STARCH SECTOR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 1979.

C. SUGAR - THE B QUOTA WOULD BE FIXED AT 120 PERCENT. HOWEVER, THE MAXIMUM QUOTA OF AN ENTERPRISE COULD NOT BE LESS THAN 95 PERCENT OF THE WITHIN QUOTA PRODUCTION REALIZED IN 1977/78. A NATIONAL AID OF 11 UA/TON OF SUGAR BEETS WOULD BE PROVIDED IN ITALY (UP TO A QUANTITY OF 1.4 MILLION TONS OF WHITE SUGAR).

D. DAIRY - AN QUOTE EXPERIMENTAL UNQUOTE SUSPENSION OF THE INTERVENTION PRICE FOR NFDM WOULD BE PUT INTO EFFECT FROM OCTOBER 1, 1978 TO MARCH 31, 1979. THE RANGE OF SUBSIDIES FOR NFDM FOR CALF FEED WOULD BE SET AT 434 TO 53 UA/100 KG. AIDS FOR LIQUID SKIM MILK WOULD BE INCREASED ACCORDINGLY. THE CORESPONSIBILITY LEVY WOULD REMAIN AT 1.5 PERCENT UNTIL SEPTEMBER 30, AND THEN DROP TO 0.5 PERCENT. THE UK CONSUMER SUBSIDY ON BUTTER WOULD BE EXTENDED TO 3/31/79. IN ADDITION, A SUBSIDY PROGRAM FOR SPECIAL CATEGORIES OF CONSUMERS (I.E., SERVICEMEN, PENSIONERS) WOULD BE REESTABLISHED. FINALLY, AN AMOUNT OF 50 MILLION UNITS OF ACCOUNT WOULD BE ALLOCATED TO OTHER CONSUMER SUBSIDY MEASURES, WHICH MIGHT CONSIST EITHER OF SALES OF LOW QUALITY BUTTER FROM INTERVENTION OR OF SPECIAL SALES ALONG THE LINE OF THE 1977 CHRISTMAS BUTTER PROGRAM. SUBSIDIES FOR THE NON-COMMERCIALIZATION

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT PARA E LINES 6 AND 7)

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OF MILK OR HERD CONVERSION WOULD BE INCREASED AS PROPOSED
BY THE COMMISSION FOR 1978/79. THE UK MILK MARKETING
BOARD WOULD BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE; HOWEVER, BEFORE
JANUARY 1, 1983, THE COUNCIL, ACTING ON A PROPOSAL BY
THE COMMISSION, AND USING QUALIFIED MAJORITY VOTING PRO-
CEDURE, WOULD DECIDE ON THE FUTURE OF THIS MECHANISM.
PRIVATE STORAGE SUBSIDIES WOULD BE PROVIDED FOR PROVOLONE
CH.

E. WINE - THE COMMISSION WOULD BE EXPECTED TO PRO-
DUCE NEW STRUCTURAL PROPOSALS IN THE WINE SECTOR BY
AUGUST 1, 1978. THERE WOULD BE A STRENGTHENING OF THE
PRICE SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR WINE. BASICALLY, THIS
STRENGTHENING WOULD INVOLVE THE APPLICATION OF SPECIAL
DISTILLATION MEASURES WHEN EC PRICES FELL 15 PERCENT BELOW
THE GUIDE PRICES FOR THREE WEEKS OR MORE. WHEN
THESE MEASURES WERE IN EFFECT, THE SALE OF WINE AT A
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PRICE OF LESS THAN 80 PERCENT OF THE GUIDE PRICE WOULD
BE PROHIBITED.

F. FRUITS AND VEGETABLES - A PENETRATION PREMIUM
ON LEMONS OF 5.44 UNITS OF ACCOUNT PER 100 KG IS PRO-
POSED. A STRENGTHENING OF THE WITHDRAWAL SYSTEM FOR
SUMMER PEARS AND PEACHES IS ALSO PROPOSED. TOMATO JUICE
AND PEARS IN SYRUP WOULD BE ADDED TO THE LIST OF PRODUCTS
ELIGIBLE FOR PROCESSING SUBSIDIES. HOWEVER, THE SUB-
SIDIES FOR THESE TWO COMMODITIES WOULD BE LIMITED TO
AVERAGE QUANTITIES PRODUCED IN THE COMMISSION IN THE
PERIOD 1975-1977. APRICOTS WOULD BE WITHDRAWN FROM THE
LIST OF PRODUCTS ELIGIBLE FOR SUBSIDIES. THE PROCESSING
SUBSIDY SYSTEM WOULD BE REEXAMINED BY OCTOBER 1, 1982,
AND AT THAT TIME A DECISION WOULD BE MADE AS TO WHETHER
TO CONTINUE IT. THE COMMISSION ORIGINALLY
PROPOSED THAT THE SYSTEM BE TERMINATED AT THE END OF THE
1982-83 MARKETING YEAR.

G. BEEF - DETAILED RULES WERE PROPOSED FOR AMENDING
THE INTERVENTION SYSTEM FOR BEEF AND VEAL. INTERVENTION
PURCHASES OF A CERTAIN QUALITY OF BEEF WOULD BE SUSPENDED
WHEN THE PRICE OF THIS QUALITY IS AT OR ABOVE THE
BUYING IN PRICE FOR A CERTAIN PERIOD OF TIME.

H. OTHER - DECISIONS ON A CAP FOR POTATOES AND SHEEPMEAT WOULD BE POSTPONED TO THE NEAR FUTURE. THE STRUCTURAL MEASURES PROPOSED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS FOR THE REFORMATION OF MEDITERRANEAN AGRICULTURE WOULD BE STRENGTHENED IN A NUMBER OF WAYS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE MEASURES FORESEEN IN THE LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON REGION WOULD BE EXTENDED TO A NUMBER OF OTHER FRENCH PROVINCES. ALSO SPECIAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STRUCTURAL MEASURES FOR DRAINAGE IN WESTERN IRELAND WOULD BE PROVIDED FOR.

6. THE COMMISSION DOCUMENT ALSO PROPOSES PRICE INCREASES FOR A NUMBER OF MAJOR COMMODITIES HIGHER THAN THOSE ORIGINALLY PROPOSED BY THE COMMISSION (REF A) AS SHOWN BELOW:

	APRIL 27 DOCUMENT	ORIGINAL PROPOSAL
	U.A./M.T.	

SOFT WHEAT

REFERENCE PRICE	136.96	139.80
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DURUM WHEAT

TARGET	224.27	218.46
INTERVENTION	203.01	195.72
SUBSIDY (U.A./HA)	63.00 (1)	66.00

(1) SEVERAL FRENCH AND ITALIAN REGIONS ARE ADDED TO THE LIST OF ELIGIBLE AREAS.

RYE

TARGET	155.12	154.65
INTERVENTION	130.25	127.00
PREMIUM FOR MILLING		
QUALITY	4.50	6.10

RICE

TARGET	301.26	296.15
INTERVENTION	174.98	171.55

SUGAR

MINIMUM PRICE (BEETS)	25.94	25.73
TARGET	352.50	349.60
INTERVENTION	334.90	332.10

INTERVENTION PRICES

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BUTTER	2357.20	2353.30
NFDM	959.30	956.30
GRANA PADANO 30-60DAYS	2311.30	2273.10
GRANA PADANO 6 MONTHS	2804.80	2731.20
KPARMIGIANO 6 MONTHS	3060.30	2963.60

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APRIL 27	ORIGINAL
DOCUMENT	PROPOSAL

BEEF		
GUIDE PRICE	1259.70	1244.40
INTERVENTION PRICE	1133.70	1120.00

PORK		
BASE PRICE	1226.04	1238.10

OLIVE OIL		
PRODUCER TARGET PRICE	1915.40	1877.80
INTERVENTION PRICE	1411.40	1454.00
PRODUCER SUBSIDY	431.10	350.00

7. THE COMMISSION WORKING DOCUMENT OUTLINED ABOVE IS

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